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Thule Times

Commander's Corner: Staying Positive!

By Col Heather L. McGee, Commander, 821st Air Base Group

I can't believe it's been over eight months since Chief Bengé and I arrived at Thule – we arrived on 2 Jul as we were delayed one day for a STORMCON CHARLIE on 1 Jul! It was 24 hours of daylight then – which at the time was hard to get used to, but now after a few months of dark, will be a welcome change when we go back to all daylight in April (don't worry, you will see plenty of sun by the end of this month!)

It's been a busy command tour so far with many activities and Distinguished Visitors (to include Her Majesty the Queen of Denmark and the SECAF), and more coming – we'll host NORAD/

NORTHCOM in March, and execute our much anticipated Greenlandic Heritage Week in April. I've seen plenty of arctic foxes, some arctic hares, but have yet to see a Polar Bear – if I do, I hope to see it from very far away and while I'm in my car so I can make a quick escape. I'm not much of an outdoors person, but I have ventured out on some Thule Trips in the "warmer" months – my next goal is to climb Mount Dundas, but I'll save that for when the sun comes out.

If there is one thing I have learned in my time here at Thule, it's to keep a positive mindset. While being away from family and friends, coupled with continual darkness, can get you down, I always try to find

something to smile about or something to look forward to each day in order to stay positive and energetic. Sometimes I'll stop in the Chapel – not necessarily to talk to Chaplain Hanson (although he always has something funny to say) – but to just sit in the awesome massage chair that is hidden away over there for a few minutes. I keep finding massage chairs all over the base – if it were up to me (meaning if I had the money), we'd have one in every office! Of course I have my moments when I miss my son terribly, but finding something positive to focus on helps me make it through the days.

Not all days will be perfect here – but one positive thought or vibe can change your whole day – and so can a massage chair!

Inside this issue:

USAF TECH SERGEANT 2 MAINTAINS EQUIP- MENT FOR THULE HIGH ARCTIC ATMOS- PHERIC OBSERVATORY	2
OP JULEMAND— SANTA COMES TO TOWN	2-3
THULE AIR BASE ON THE MAP	4
UPCOMING EVENTS	5

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Team Thule!

Greenlandic Heritage Week is fast approaching and we are very excited!

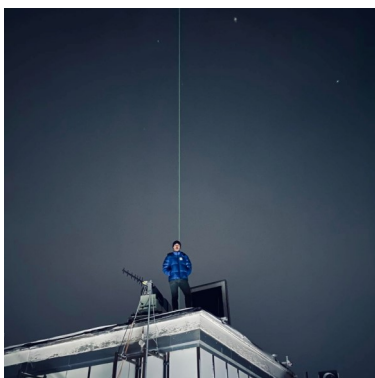
When: **15 - 18 April 2022**

What to expect: Dog Sled Race Snowmobile Rides
Dog Sled Rides Helicopter Rides
and much more!

Over the coming weeks and months you will see more details and chances to sign-up or win some very unique experiences!

USAF Tech Sergeant Maintains Equipment for Thule High Arctic Atmospheric Observatory

By MSgt Brian Messier, 821st Support Squadron, Chief Air Traffic Controller



TSgt Charles M. Klinger stands atop the observatory during a data-gathering operation.

One of the principal complicated issues that the international community faces for its future is global climate change. At Thule Air Base, Greenland, the Air and Space Force, along with their allied partners, are at the forefront of the issue. One Airman in particular is doing just about everything he can to support one of Thule's top mission priorities and further the research capabilities for leading scientists around the globe. TSgt Charles M. Klinger, an Air Traffic Controller assigned to the 821st Support Squadron, has been operating and maintaining some of the ground based equipment

located at the Thule High Arctic Atmospheric Observatory (THAAO). Operated by an international team of scientists based in Italy and overseen by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other agencies, the observatory and its instruments are key to data collection and analysis for several multi-year research projects dating back to 1991.

One of the more involved processes TSgt Klinger drives is the collection of data from the LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). This is a high powered laser used to measure temperature, aerosols, and particulate matter from the Earth's upper atmosphere, which have a direct effect on the increasing temperatures in the Arctic region and climate change across the world as a whole. This data, along with the data derived from the other instruments he utilizes and maintains, paints a detailed picture of atmospheric changes in the increasingly vulnerable arctic.

When asked about the significance of the work he's doing, TSgt Klinger

said, "Because I go up and continue the research, I'm able to increase their research exponentially. They typically only operate the LIDAR once a day for two-ish weeks once a year. I'm able to go up once or twice a week, depending on the weather, and give them further data that they otherwise would need to fly here for or have someone permanently stationed here doing. It's a more complete picture".

As a result of his work at the THAAO, TSgt Klinger has been listed as the co-author in two recent scientific research papers, the findings of which have been presented internationally by the team of scientists based in Italy, with more research still ongoing. For his efforts at the THAAO and other environmental research projects at Thule, TSgt Klinger received letters of recommendation from Josh Willis (NASA OMG Lead Scientist) and Giovanni Muscari (INGV Lead Scientist) and was accepted into a Land Resources and Environmental Sciences Master's Program at Montana State University.

Op JULEMAND—Santa Came to Town

By Capt Clifton Hanson, Installation Chaplain, Thule AB, Greenland

On 18 December, the Operation Julemand team traveled to the northern Greenlandic village of Qaanaaq. Our trip had been delayed multiple times due to weather conditions, but on that day, Jens and Arne, our helicopter flight crew, ably ferried Santa Claus and our team, comprised of SMSgt Cosler, SSgt Hilliard, SSgt Svendsen, SSgt DeCosta, and myself through

the enveloping mid-winter darkness, 60 miles north of Thule Air Base to the tiny village.

2021 marked the 62nd annual Operation Julemand. It was started in 1959 by two airmen stationed at Thule who, being away from their own children, simply wanted to bring some joy to children at Christmas time. At that time, the displacement of locals from the

area immediately surrounding Thule Air Base was still a very recent event, and this operation was one way that US military members sought to build relations with local communities. Four villages are part of Operation Julemand:



Op JULEMAND—Cont'd

Qaanaaq, Savissivik, Siorapaluk, and Qeqertat. Qaanaaq, the largest of the four and the education hub for all the villages, is the focal point of the operation.

When we landed outside Qaanaaq, we were greeted by members and leaders of the community, loaded into a fire truck, and taken into the village lights flashing and sirens sounding. Children ran along the side of the road, greeting Santa with cheers, and followed us to the local school where over 200 members of the community were gathered for the festivities.



Thule Team Members wrapping presents.

When we arrived, the village leader greeted us in Greenlandic, and Santa Claus gave a translated greeting to the gathered community. The gifts, which had been wrapped and sent a month earlier, were waiting under the tree at the gym center. Santa was given the honor of giving the first gift; from there, the elves took over, and pure, joyous chaos erupted. Our team was surrounded by kids, excited to take pictures with the Americans. Santa couldn't turn around without having another infant placed in his arms or a child on his knee for yet another picture. The experience was absolutely electrifying. After the main festivities ended, our team walked to the local

community center with village leaders where we were given a tour and some lovely gifts of our own.



Local families enjoying their presents. (Photo by SSgt David Svendsen, 821st Security Forces Squadron)

Then, it was back to Thule. The day, however, was not over yet. Air Greenland had made room for Santa Claus on the outgoing flight to Savissivik, an island village of approximately 50 inhabitants. This was the first time Santa Claus, and OJ had visited Savissivik in recent memory—one villager claimed it had been more than twenty years. When the helicopter landed, the whole village was gathered nearby, waiting for Santa's arrival. The presents had yet to be delivered here, so Santa got to do the honors himself. The children looked up at him in awe as he trudged next to them in the snow, bag of presents slung over his back. When they arrived at the tiny schoolhouse, the children performed a traditional song as they danced a circle around the tree. Santa Claus isn't one to shed tears, but I was told his eyes were welling up as the little ones finished their song. Because Santa did not typically visit Savissivik, the gifts that come from Operation Julemand are usually distributed to the children at Christmas Eve church services.

With Santa's special visit, the village leaders made an exception, allowing the children to open their gifts early.



Thule Team members graciously accepting the gifted painting, which is on display at the chapel. (Photo by SSgt David Svendsen, 821st Security Forces Squadron)

When the day was finished, and our team reflected on all we had seen and done, we realized that something unexpected had occurred. Yes, we had "strengthened US military relations with host nations," which is great fodder for an award package. And yes, we had delivered 250 gifts to 209 children in the 4 villages, and there was much Christmas cheer as a result. But what experiencing the joy of those communities did to each of us—that was something more than we expected. In a place so dark and cold and isolated, to be blessed to bring and participate in that kind of shared joy marked us all in ways we gratefully carry all of our days.



Chaplain Hanson as Santa Claus, holding an infant. (Photo by SSgt David Svendsen, 821st Security Forces Squadron)

Thule Air Base on the Map

By Lt Col Doug Hickey, Deputy Commander, 821st Air Base Group



Colonel Heather McGee, Commander, 821st Air Base Group presents a token of appreciation from the Airmen and Guardians at Thule Air Base to Her Majesty, the Queen of Denmark, Margrethe II.

(Photo by SSgt David Svendsen, 821st Security Forces Squadron)

Thule Air Base, the northernmost Department of Defense installation, remains postured to enable force projection, space superiority, and scientific research in the Arctic Region for the United States and Allies through integrated base support and defense operations. The collective efforts of the 821st Air Base Group (base operating support), 12th Space Warning Squadron (missile warning, missile defense, space domain awareness), and 23rd Space Operations Squadron, Detachment 1 (satellite telemetry, tracking, commanding) make this all possible.



Commander, Space Operations Command, Lieutenant General Stephen Whiting, thank the Airmen and Guardians at Thule Air Base prior to the Holiday Season.

Over the last 4 months, Thule Air Base has had the opportunity to showcase its importance in the Arctic by hosting numerous United States and international leaders. Of note were Her Majesty, the Queen of Denmark, Margrethe II; Secretary of the Air Force, The Honorable Frank Kendall; Commander, United States Space Command, General James Dickinson; Chief of Space Operations, General John Raymond; Commander, Space Operations Command,

Lieutenant General Stephen Whiting; Commander, Peterson-Schriever Garrison, Colonel Zachary Warakomski; Deputy Commander, Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Region, Brigadier General Derek O'Malley; and Deputy Director for the Office of Emerging Security Challenges in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, United States Department of State, Mr. William Shobert II.



Colonel Zachary Warakomski, Commander, Peterson-Schriever Garrison, talks with Airmen and Guardians at a Town Hall during his first visit to Thule Air Base.

(Photo by SSgt Aziza Wilkerson, 821st Support Squadron)

These visits served as an opportunity for senior leaders to thank Airmen and Guardians for their work in the Arctic environment supporting and safeguarding United States national security interests. Additionally, the 'eyes-on' visits to Thule Air Base furthered senior leader understanding of the missions accomplished and associated challenges in our remote location where the only way in or out is via plane or boat. Having senior leaders visit Thule Air Base is invaluable to furthering the Thule Air Base mission as advocacy is needed at the highest levels for resourcing and funding of Thule Air Base current and future investment projects to be able to keep up with the desires outlined in the United States and Department of Defense Arctic Strategy. Thule Air



Chief of Space Operations, General John Raymond, stop by the Thule Air Base radio station to record a shout-out broadcasted on the Polar Playbook radio show with TSgt Leanthony Bosserman, 821st Support Squadron.

(Photo by SSgt Simplicio Espiritu, 12th Space Warning Squadron).

Base is a central piece to the Arctic Strategy, however, it has to compete with other priorities across the Department of Defense to gain timely funding to be able to execute improvements to power generation, airfield access, communications and facility infrastructure and achieve the following mission objectives:

Objective 1: Strengthen our partnerships with the DoD and the Department of the Air Force (DAF) and with our international allies and research organizations through innovation and collaboration (cooperation).

Objective 2: Enhance our capability to conduct mission operations while building a sustainable physical and cyber infrastructure in an austere environment (resiliency).

Objective 3: Remain mission ready and resourced and adapt for surge operations in support of contingencies (response).



12th Space Warning Squadron Guardians pose with Army General James Dickinson, Commander, United States Space Command (USSPACECOM), and Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant Scott Stalker, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, on the roof of the radar overlooking North Star Bay.

(Photo by SSgt David Svendsen, 821st Security Forces Squadron)

THULE EVENTS SCHEDULE

11 Mar	Bar Games
11 Mar	80s-90s Party
12 Mar	3 V 3 Basketball Tournament
12 Mar	Glow Bowling
12 Mar	Karaoke
18 Mar	Free Bowling
18 Mar	St. Patrick's Day Party
20 Mar	Mongolian BBQ
5 Apr	AFE Adventure visit
15-19 Apr	Greenland Heritage Week
18 Apr	Easter
28 Apr	(tentative) AFE Pro-Blitz visit
26 May	Combat Dining Out (buy your Nerf guns now!)

THULE EVENT CALENDAR

All events for Thule are located on this calendar (Activities, Top III, Rising 6, Chapel, TOW, Fitness etc.)!

How to scan QR code

(Dormnet, Baraknet or TeleGreenland):

iPhone Users:

1. Open camera
2. Hover camera over QR code and click the pop up


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How to save a link to your home screen

iPhone Users:

1. Open the calendar in safari
2. At the bottom of the browser press 
3. Press "Add to Home Screen"

Android Users:

1. Open the calendar in Chrome
2. At the top right corner press 
3. Press "Add to Home Screen"